Trains Album of Photographs

RAILROADS OF CHICAGO

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Chicago is a magic word in American railroading. By the logic of geography this city at the south end of Lake Michigan became the world's greatest gathering place of railroads, a melting pot of commerce.

Here 22 trunk lines, 7 belt and switching roads, 8 industrial railroads and 3 electric lines interlace a city with their spiderweb of trackage. Within Chicago alone are more miles of track than in any one of 16 entire states.

Locomotives are all over the place. At any one time 1100 of them are at work — putting trains together and taking them apart, transferring cars from one yard to another, pulling incoming and outgoing trains on the great main lines which radiate like spokes from the downtown Loop area.

A passenger train arrives or leaves on an average of every 51 seconds, a freight train every 35 seconds. A railroad ticket is sold every second, and six passengers a second board or leave trains.

Track crews are constantly at work, putting down hundreds of tons of new rail every day. Coal chutes, oil spouts, stock rooms, dining car commissaries, repair shops and other railroad units use supplies at the rate of nearly $50 million a year. Nearly 20,000 tons of mail and express are handled every day.

The great freight yards, Clearing, Proviso, Bensenville, Barr, Markham, Hawthorne and the dozens and dozens of smaller yards have capacity for a quarter of a million cars, and through them ebbs and flows the commerce of an empire.

The streamliners which are household words thousands of miles away back their bright tail signs against the bumping posts of Chicago's six major terminals as they make ready for departures to the four boundaries of our country. The cosmopolitan transcontinental passengers hustle from station to station in the always busy Parmalee coaches, and then mingle with the crowds of commuters bound for Hinsdale and Glenview, Glencoe or Homewood.

Steam and diesel oil, action and color — this is Chicago, undisputed railroad capital of the world.

BOOK 18

Trains Album of Railroad Photographs

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TRAINS ALBUMS OF RAILROAD PHOTOGRAPHS

By the Editors of Trains Magazine

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CHICAGO

. . . railroad center of the nation

EMPIRE BUILDER
Chicago to Seattle-Portland

OLYMPIAN HIAWATHA
Chicago to Seattle-Tacoma

NEW ENGLAND STATES
Chicago to Boston

DENVER ZEPHYR
Chicago to Denver

TWIN CITIES "400"
Chicago to St. Paul-Minneapolis

NORTH COAST LIMITED
Chicago to Portland-Seattle

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY
Chicago to Cincinnati

GOLDEN STATE
Chicago to Los Angeles

BROADWAY LIMITED
Chicago to New York

CITY OF LOS ANGELES
Chicago to Los Angeles

ABRAHAM LINCOLN
Chicago to St. Louis

CALIFORNIA ZEPHYR
Chicago to San Francisco

20TH CENTURY LIMITED
Chicago to New York

SUPER CHIEF
Chicago to Los Angeles

SOUTH WIND
Chicago to Miami

PANAMA LIMITED
Chicago to New Orleans

Chicago is the hub of America's railroad passenger service. From its terminals leave trains of every variety — from those palaces on wheels, the Century and the Super Chief, to the lonely and lowly two-car "owl" commuter. The main-line trains have destinations as varied as the four boundaries of the United States — and beyond. The brightly colored rear-end signs flaunt the names of a majority of the country's famous streamliners. People in the stations, aside from rush-hour commuters, are a cross section of Americans from everywhere.

Meat from Sioux Falls arrives at Bensonville Yard, Chicago, behind one of the Milwaukee Road's class S-3 4-8-4 locomotives. These general service engines are used on both fast freight and heavy passenger runs. They were built by American Locomotive Works during World War II. Characteristic square-end Milwaukee Road semaphore blades are being replaced gradually by searchlight signals. Henry McCord photo.

One of Chicago's most distinguished train departures is the Twentieth Century Limited, photographed above (by John Wenzel) as it starts to move out of La Salle Street Station, terminal of New York Central, Rock Island and Nickel Plate. The tall Board of Trade Building behind the station has been so often pictured in connection with La Salle Street Station scenes many people think it is the station building. More railroads (seven) use Dearborn Station, Chicago end of the Santa Fe. Photo at right, by Charles McCreary, shows the Grand Canyon Limited just prior to departure.

Twenty-four hours a day the railroad stations of Chicago vibrate with the excitement of trains arriving and departing — not just the little trains to nearby places, but the big glittering name trains to the rims of the country. From North Western Terminal the Streamliners leave for Denver, San Francisco and Los Angeles, veritable hotels on wheels. At left is the City of Los Angeles shortly before its evening departure. Hidden behind is the City of San Francisco. The Cities of Denver and Portland are already making the steel hum as they speed westward along North Western's double track high speed line. Below (photo by Curtis Thatcher) is the Royal Palm for Florida about ready to leave Illinois Central's lakefront station for its run over Big Four, Southern and Florida East Coast.

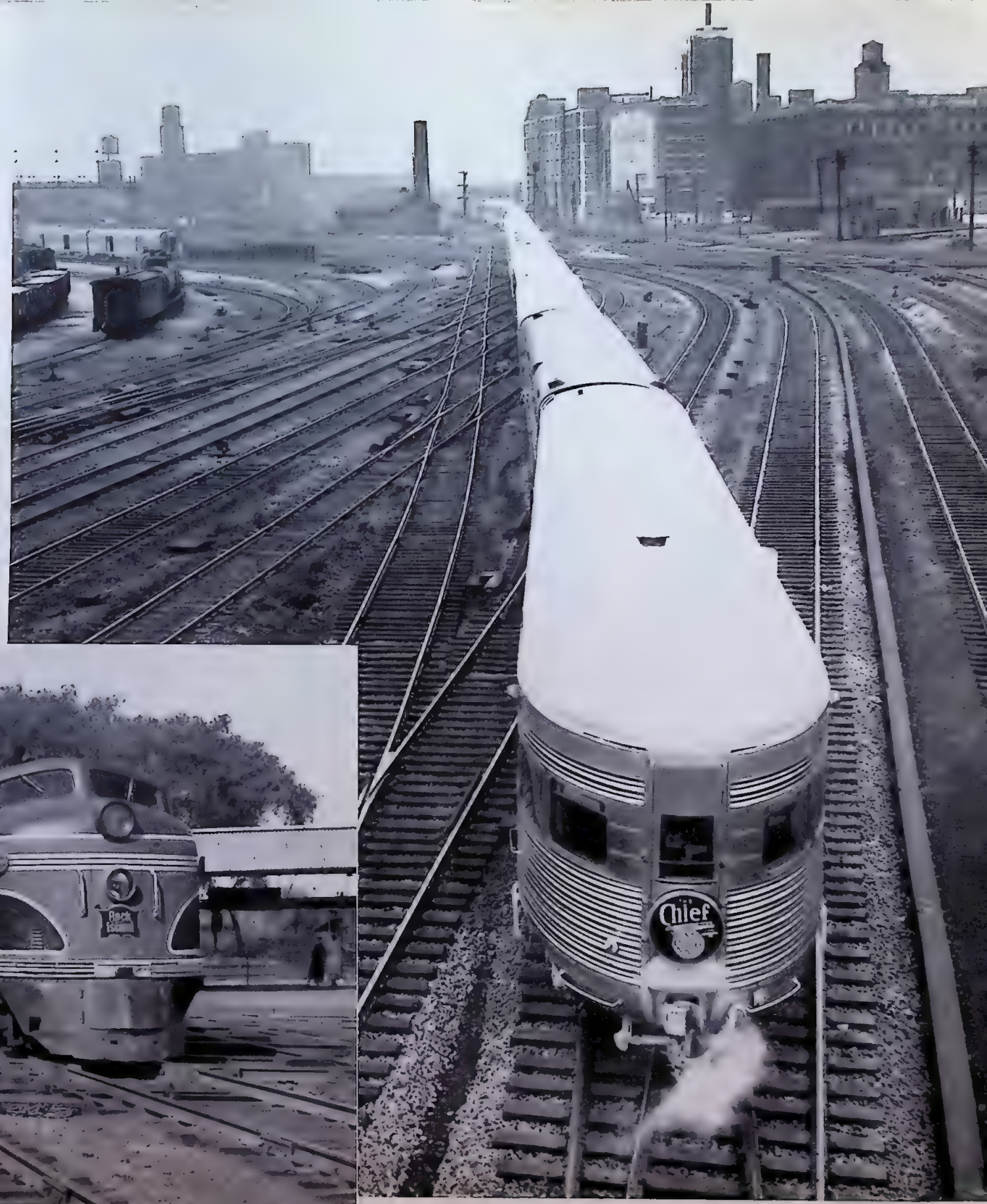
Is this the world's fastest commuter train? It is Chicago & North Western's Commuter 400, zipping through Lake Bluff interlocking north of Chicago at 95 m.p.h. It runs from Chicago to Milwaukee, 85 miles in 85 minutes, with four intermediate stops, returns in 80 minutes, also with four stops. Same equipment makes afternoon 414-mile round trip to Green Bay. Other trains of the "400" fleet serve points in Wisconsin, northern Michigan and Minnesota. Photo by Wallace W. Abbey.

Englewood Union Station, on 63rd Street in Chicago's south side, is one of the city's best spots for train watching. Here travelers can change directly from California trains of the Rock Island to eastern trains of New York Central, Pennsylvania, or Nickel Plate. Photo at left, by D. W. Yungmeyer, shows two Rockets on the Rock Island side of the triangular station layout, while below (by E. A. Behr) is the famous scene as the Twentieth Century and the Broadway get under way simultaneously for New York from the eastern end of the Englewood station, the Broadway behind a class T-1 4-4-4-4 duplex.

Railroad lines feed into Chicago radially from all directions except lakeward. One of the more important of the many spokes in the Chicago transportation wheel is the Burlington line, which runs slightly south of westward, carrying the commerce of Chicago to such Granger country centers as Omaha, the Twin Cities, St. Louis, Denver and Kansas City. As far as Aurora, 38 miles, the "Q" is three-tracked, and the center track is used in either direction. Scene above, at Eola, shows one of the crossover points where trains can change tracks under protection of an interlocking tower. Photo by Henry McCord. At right is a CB&Q steam-powered freight highballing through La Grange, 14 miles west of Chicago. Photo by Bob Borcherding.

Chicago & Eastern Illinois' Dixie Limited picks up speed as it leaves 21st Street crossing in Chicago. The engine is one of C&EI's six heavy Pacifics. The tracks are Chicago & Western Indiana, the terminal road which owns Dearborn Station. Back of engine are Pennsylvania Railroad tracks; in background are Santa Fe, Alton and Illinois Central, making this one of Chicago's busiest spots. Donald Deneen photo.

Railroads from East and West cross all over Chicago. Two of the more spectacular and busy crossings are on the south side, at 21st Street (right) and 63rd Street (below). The 21st Street crossing involves not only Santa Fe, but Pennsylvania, Alton, Illinois Central and Chicago & Western Indiana. But that's not all, because C&WI tracks are used by Wabash, Erie, Monon, Grand Trunk and Chicago & Eastern Illinois. A busy crossing indeed, and far more complicated than it looks here with the Santa Fe Chief stretched out across the diamonds. The train on 63rd Street (Englewood) crossing between Rock Island and Pennsylvania is the Rocky Mountain Rocket. Photo by Ira Eigsti.



Chicagoans are almost certain to see any experimental equipment on almost any railroad. Here the Pennsylvania Railroad's experimental direct-drive steam turbine locomotive heads in toward Union Station on the Manhattan Limited. In background are Pennsy's Chicago coach servicing yards. Photo by W. H. N. Rossiter.

In Chicago, the world's greatest junction point, terminal railroads are of top importance. Many precious hours and tens of thousands of dollars are saved daily by roads like the Chicago Outer Belt (right, at Rondout crossing of Milwaukee Road) which can transfer freight from road to road around the outskirts of the city. Baltimore & Ohio Chicago Terminal is a terminal and belt line road which not only hauls freight, as below at Blue Island, but also moves varnish like the Capitol Limited shown leaving for Washington. Outer Belt photo by Wallace Abbey; Capitol Limited photo by Bob Borcherding.

The Soo Line (Minneapolis, St. Paul & Sault Ste. Marie RR.) is Canadian Pacific's strong right arm reaching from Canada down through the Dakotas, Minnesota and Wisconsin to Chicago. Soo Line is a potent freight carrier, and its 4-8-2's can be seen moving tonnage at a mile-a-minute or better as at left, through Gray's Lake, Ill. Photo by Robert Nicholls. At right, in Rail Photo Service photo, is Monon's streamlined Hoosier not far out of Dearborn Station, heading for Indianapolis.

Wabash trains are characterized by their trim, well-maintained steam locomotives. Photo at left, by Richard C. Cook, shows the morning Wabash local from Decatur to Chicago. Regular locomotive on this run is an Atlantic. At right is a diesel-powered freight on the Chicago Great Western, photographed near Elmhurst, west of Chicago, by Robert Milner.

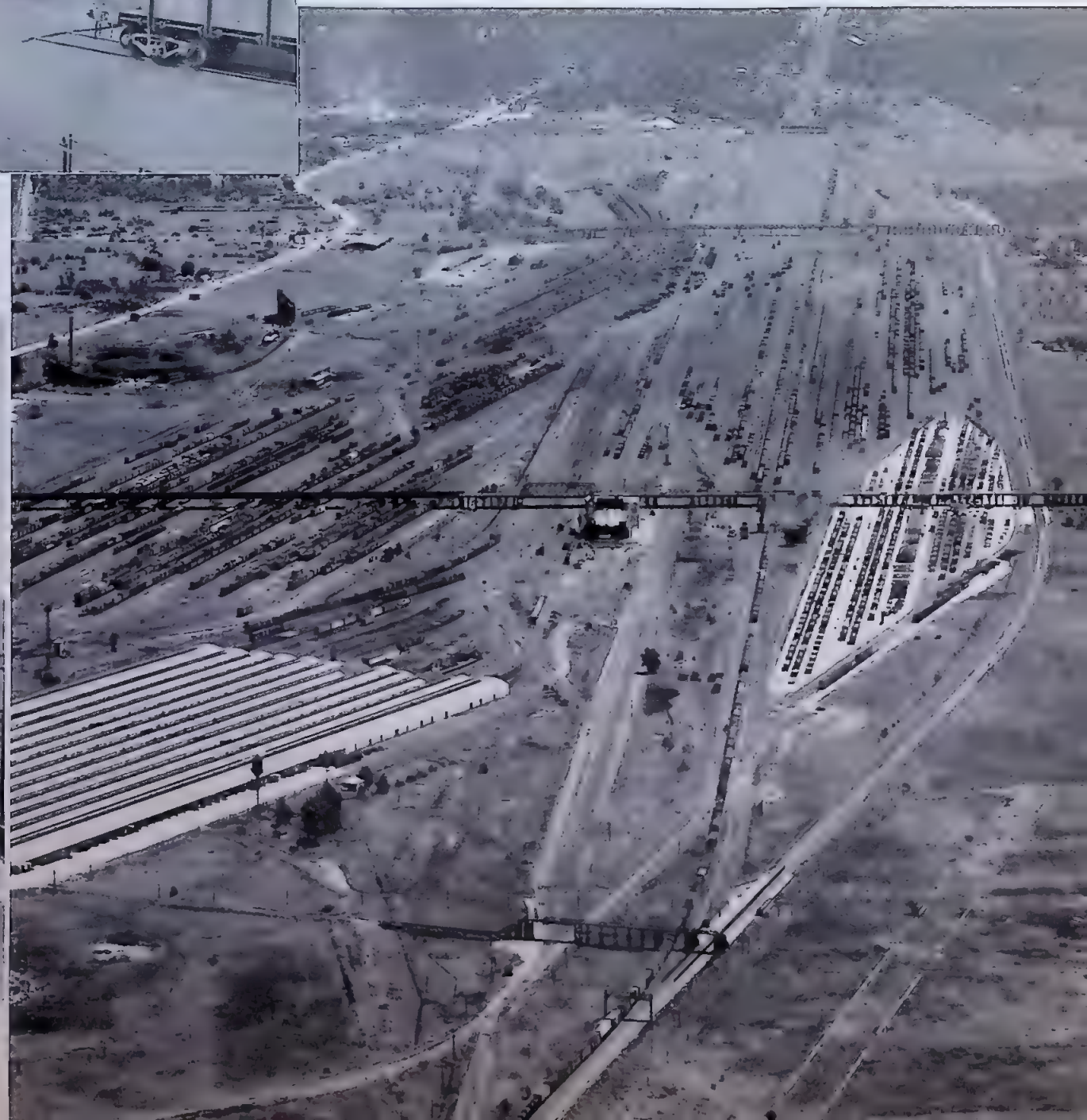
The interurban is dead in the highly congested Chicago area, but in its place has risen the modern electrified railroad. With multiple-unit cars and third rail or trolley wire, electric railroads haul a large share of the commuters and also move freight and inter-city passengers as well. Illinois Central's entire electric suburban system, tracks, stations and cars, is designed functionally for the most efficient movement of short haul passengers. Photo below, by Linn Westcott, shows IC suburban train on South Chicago branch. Photo at right above shows one of North Shore's Electroliners which ply the 85 miles through the North Shore suburbs to Milwaukee. Below, by Donald Sims, is a South Shore train from South Bend.

The South Shore Line (Chicago, South Shore & South Bend) is not only an important carrier of commuting passengers, but also of freight. It recently purchased three heavy electric locomotives like the 803 (left) which had been originally made for export to Russia, and they are now heading a fleet of smaller steeple-cab models. Photo by Victor Wagner. Multiple-unit passenger train above is on the Chicago, Aurora & Elgin, primarily a commuter road to western suburbs. Henry McCord photo.

One of the most beautiful sights in America is Illinois Central's eight-track main line through the south side of Chicago. Four tracks are under trolley for suburban service, two are used for through passenger trains, and two for freight. Train, the Daylight, for St. Louis. Photo by Donald Sims.

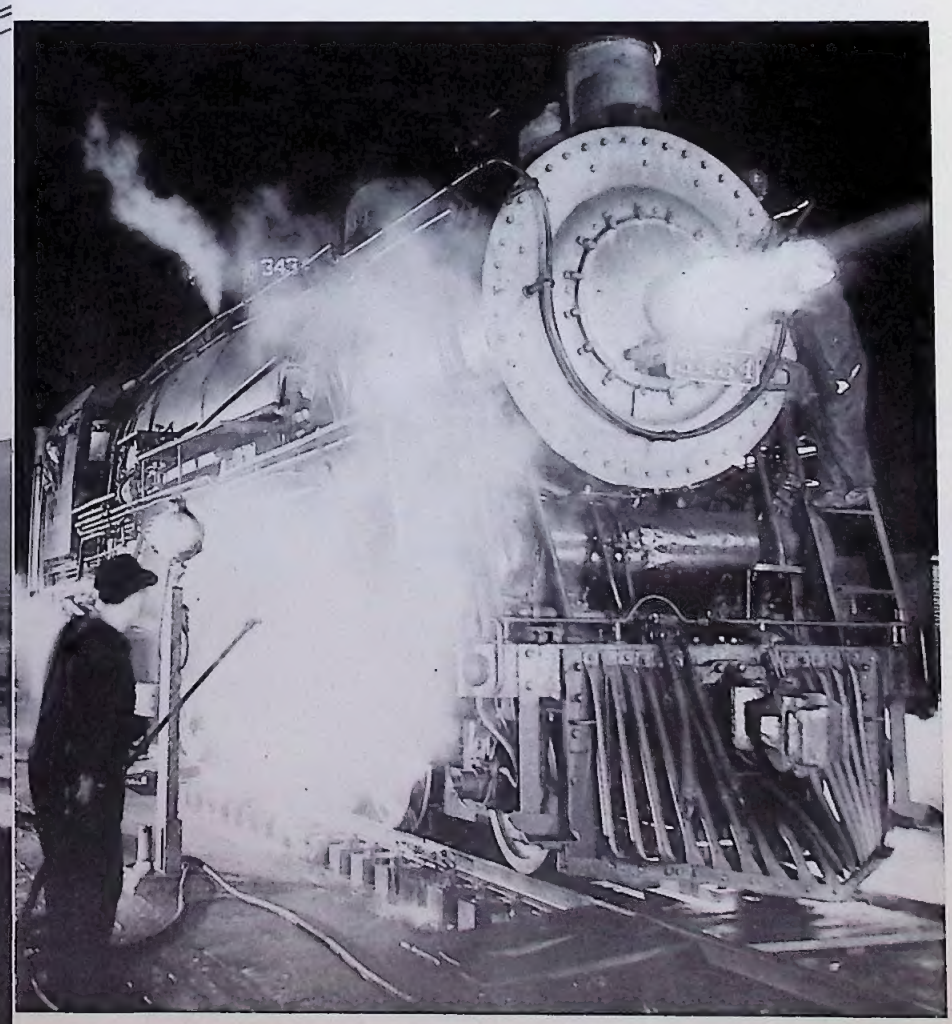
In a city as large as Chicago, street congestion and parking difficulties would be intolerable if everyone drove to work. Railroad suburban service takes over a large part of the load. North Western hauls a large share of the commuter business, partly behind sprightly Atlantics like the 397, shown near Glen Ellyn on the line west. Photo by Robert Nicholls. One of Pennsylvania's few Chicago commuters is pictured at Englewood. Photo by D. W. Yungmeyer. The photo at right, by T. E. Kiley, shows one of the busiest spots in all Chicago, Van Buren Street Station of the Illinois Central electric. These tracks and Randolph Street terminal are used exclusively for Chicago's heaviest commuter business.

On most Chicago suburban runs the steam locomotive reigns supreme, and usually the steam locomotive is a Pacific of more or less standard design. Coaches, however, have often been designed especially for this service, like the Rock Island suburban cars in train at right, pictured at Englewood by Donald Sims. On both Rock Island and Burlington the diesel has started to take over. Burlington suburban train below is at Eola, just east of Aurora, the limit of suburban service. Photo by Henry J. McCord. Milwaukee Road suburban service uses coaches of conventional design. Photo, at Western Avenue, also by McCord.



At left is a scene in Illinois Central's engine terminal near downtown Chicago. Photo by Ira Eigsti. Below and at left below are two of the freight yards in Chicago area that contribute to the total of nearly a quarter of a million car capacity. The hump scene is at Clearing Yard, a "union" yard used jointly by 12 railroads. Its double-track hump is always busy. Photo by Linn Westcott. The air view (by Chicago Aerial Survey Co.) is of North Western's Proviso Yard, west of Chicago but also connected to lines north and northwest. Main line is at right of the yard.

Chicago is a city of locomotives — 1100 of them at any one time — and engine terminals practically dot the landscape. The atmospheric Henry McCord photo below shows a typical scene at the Milwaukee Road's big Western Avenue roundhouse. At right is a class H 4-8-4 turning at North Western's 56-stall roundhouse near giant Proviso Yard, while below is a Santa Fe Pacific getting a scrubbing with steam at the Chicago end of the line.



Milwaukee Road's Midwest Hiawatha, for Omaha, heads westward behind its yellow, gray and red diesel. The scene is at Bensonville, next to the Milwaukee's largest freight yard in the Chicago area. Some of the Milwaukee's streamlined passenger cars have skirting beneath the floor level and others do not, accounting for apparent difference in floor level. Photo by Henry J. McCord.